

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-8 are pending.

Claims 1-8 stand rejected;

Claims 1-3, and 5-8 are amended. No new matter has been added.

II. Rejection under 35 USC §112

The examiner has rejected claims 1-3 and 6-7 as being "indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention."

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the examiner's rejection of the form of the claims. However, in order to advance the prosecution of this matter, applicant has amended claims 1-3 and 5-8 to correct form. No new matter has been added. With regard to the examiner's statement that proper antecedent basis is not found, applicant has provided proper antecedent basis by appropriate amendment of the definite article "the" to the indefinite article "a."

Applicant submits that claims 1-3 and 5-8 were amended to more clearly describe the subject matter claimed as the invention and to correct errors in form. The amendments were not necessarily to overcome the reference cited. Furthermore, Applicant submits that the substance of the originally filed claims has not been amended. Accordingly, the amendments made are not related to patentability and do not alter or limit the substance of the subject matter claimed.

Having amended claims 1-3 and 5-8, applicant submits that the examiner's reason for rejecting the claims has been overcome. Applicant respectfully requests the amendment be entered and the rejection withdrawn.

III. Rejection under 35 USC §102

The examiner has rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USP No. 5,729,492 to Campardo. It is the examiner's position that "Campardo ... discloses in Fig. 1 a memory circuit comprising: differential sense amplifier 3 having a first input terminal connected to memory cell MC column 7 and a second input terminal connected to reference voltage V22; a first capacitor C1 for storing the precharge voltage; precharge transistor 12 being addressable by address transition detection signal ATD; a second capacitor C2 for setting the value of the reference voltage V22."

Applicant respectfully disagrees with and explicitly traverses the examiner's rejection of the claims. A claim is anticipated only if each and every element recited therein is expressly or inherently described in a single prior art reference. As will be shown, Campardo does not expressly or inherently describe each and every element recited in the claims.

With regard to independent claim 1, this claim, shown in final form, recites:

1. A device for reading a cell (4) of a memory, comprising:
 - a differential sense amplifier (18) having a first input terminal (16) connected to a cell column (10); and
 - a circuit (34) for providing a second input terminal (20) of the amplifier (18) a reference voltage (Vref), wherein said circuit (34) includes:
 - a first means (38) for storing the voltage of said column; and
 - a second means (40, 42) for applying as a reference voltage (Vref) the stored voltage modified by a predetermined amount.

Campardo, on the other hand, discloses a sense amplifier circuit for a memory comprising a first converter for converting a memory cell current to a voltage and a second converter for converting a reference current to a reference voltage and a voltage comparator for comparing the voltage signal and the reference voltage signal. The circuit is suitable for compensating an offset voltage introduced in the voltage signal by an offset current superimposed on the current of the memory cell to be read (see abstract, last sentence).

Campardo does not disclose a circuit "for applying as a reference voltage (Vref) the stored voltage modified by a predetermined amount" as is recited in claim 1. Rather, Campardo discloses that the reference voltage is based on a reference current that is generated in a manner that is substantially similar to that of the memory cell that it is testing (see col. 4, lines 32-48). Campardo does not use a stored voltage as the reference voltage or modify the reference voltage. Campardo cannot be said to anticipate the present invention because Campardo does not disclose each and every element of the present invention as recited in claim 1.

Having distinguished applicant's invention of Claim 1 from the references cited, applicant submits that the basis for the examiner's rejection cannot be sustained. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn and Claim 1 be allowed.

With regard to independent claim 6, this claim recites a method for modifying a reference voltage using a structure as is recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, applicant's remarks made with regard to claim 1 are appropriate, and repeated, in response to the examiner's rejection of this claim. Accordingly, Claim 6 is also patently distinct over the device disclosed by Campardo.

With regard to claims 2-5 and 7-8, these claims ultimately depend from claims 1 and 6, respectively, which have been shown to be allowable. Accordingly, claims 2-5 and 7-8 are also allowable by virtue of their dependency upon an allowable base claim.

Having distinguished applicant's invention of Claims 1-8 from the references cited, applicant submits that the basis for the examiner's rejection cannot be sustained. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn and Claims 1-8 be allowed.

IV. Objection to the Drawings

The examiner has objected to the figures. More specifically, the examiner states that

"Figure 1 should be designated by a legend such as -- Prior Art--." The examiner further objects to the drawings stating that "the drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the feature as recited in claims 4-5 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claims."

With regard to Figure 1, applicant submits, in Exhibit A, a marked up copy of Figure 1, including the textual information --Prior Art --. A clean copy of Figure 1 is also included.

With regard to the features recited in claims 4-5, i.e., claim 4 - capacitive elements are MOS transistors and claim 5 - precharge transistor, applicant respectfully submits that this information is already shown in the drawings. More specifically, devices 38 and 40 are represented as capacitor devices but one skilled in the art would recognize that inherent capacitance of other types of devices, such as MOS transistors, may also be used appropriately. Support for this feature is found in the specification on page 6, lines 11-14. With regard to the precharge transistor, this device is clearly shown in Figure 2.

Having amended Figure 1 as requested and explaining how the features of claims 4 and 5 are shown in the figures, applicant submits that the examiner's reasons for rejecting the figures can no longer be sustained. Applicant respectfully requests Figure 1 be entered and the objection withdrawn.

V. Conclusion

Having addressed the examiner's rejections of the claims under 35 USC §§ 102, 112, and the objection to the figures, applicant submits that the reasons for the examiner's rejection have been overcome and can no longer be sustained. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections and that a Notice of Allowance be issued.

If the examiner believes that the prosecution of this matter may be advanced by a

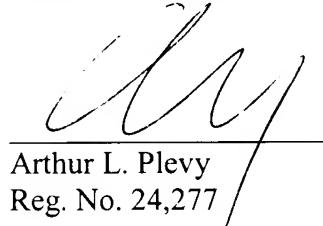
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telephone call, the examiner is invited to contact applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

VI. Fees

A petition for a one month extension and this firm's check in the amount of \$110.00 to cover the cost of filing this petition extension is enclosed. No other fees are believed necessary for filing this response. However, the Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any excess payment that may be associated with this communication to Duane Morris LLP deposit account **50-2061**.

Respectfully submitted,


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